

The Fresno Bee

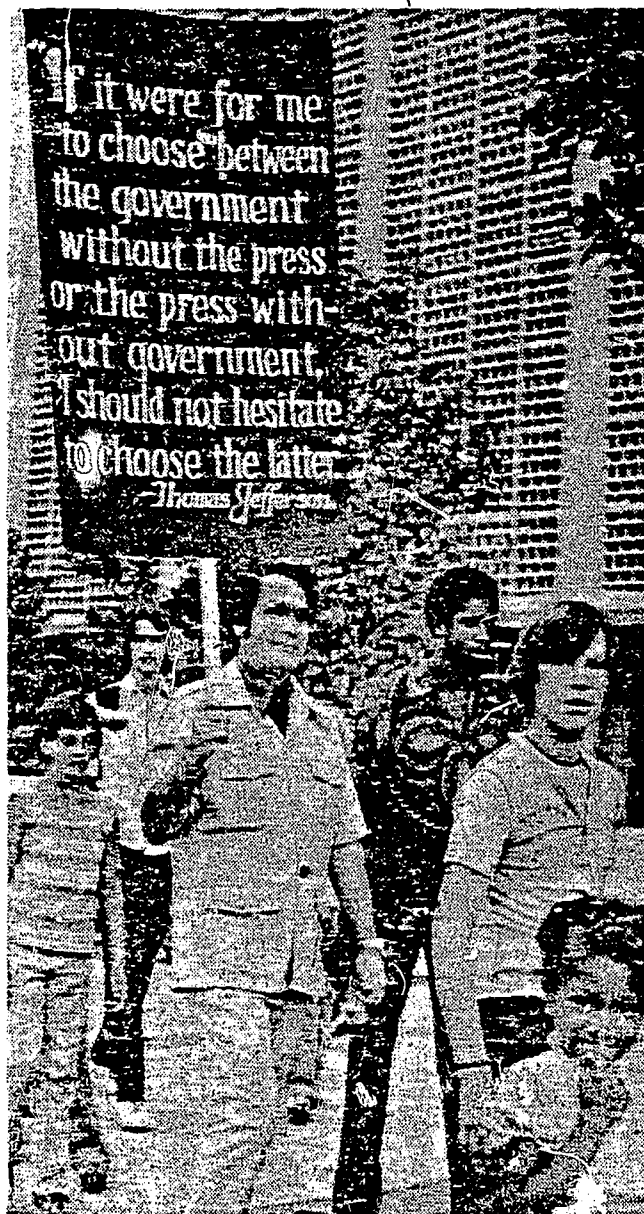
Fri., Sept. 10, 1978

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Peoples Temple was not seeking publicity when the congregation took up a march on behalf of the Fresno Bee Four. Actually, the demonstrators requested that the press not publicize the Temple itself, but convey the seriousness of the issue at stake. The demonstration received the grateful support of the McClatchy family, owners of the Fresno Bee, Sacramento Bee, and Modesto Bee, as well as TV and radio stations in several cities. The New York Times, AP and UPI all covered the event, displaying prominent, bold-type headlines. Major TV and radio stations across the nation carried the story as well.

Peoples Forum has reprinted, in this issue, excerpts of articles about the Fresno demonstration in order to impress upon our readers the utter seriousness of the Bee Four issue. The loss of freedom has always started with the demise of freedom of the press.

Defending Others' Rights SF Church Members Demonstrate Support For Newsmen



Rev. Jim Jones holds sign in Bee Four vigil.

Bee photos by Ralph Thronberry

It is difficult to watch the quiet demonstration of support for the Bee Four in Courthouse Park without having tears of emotion cloud your vision.

They walk somberly and almost silently, courteously stopping the parade from time to time to permit others to pass through their lines.

Sprinkled among the 500 or so demonstrators from Peoples Temple in San Francisco are hand-carried signs with such slogans as "Free Our Newsmen, Now." Most of the demonstrators are women and the majority are black.

They are Americans demonstrating quietly their belief that an injustice is being done in the sentencing of the four Fresno Bee newsmen to indefinite jail terms until they reveal their source of information for a series of news stories.

The strength of their belief is moving and impressive. They have subjected themselves to the elements - heat Thursday and then rain Friday and Friday night - to long, tedious bus rides, to the inconvenience of public toilet facilities, meals prepared on a bus. They could easily have stayed home enjoying far more comforts.

They chose not to. They chose to demonstrate in support of four newsmen none of them had ever met. But they have a solid acquaintanceship with the principles of human rights. One said, "In the church, we learn to respect each other's rights and to defend them if necessary."

This is what America is all about - defending each other's rights. Thank you, members of Peoples Temple, for showing it to others.

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The four of us have been deeply touched by the remarkable outpouring of good will and support shown by the members of your church the past two days.

It is heartening to know that people like you and your congregation understand the principles we are standing for and that you hold them so dearly that you will take the time and expense to demonstrate your belief in them.

Words cannot adequately express the depth of our feelings. To watch on television that long line of marchers and realize we were the beneficiaries of such a demonstration is something we will hold in our memories for a long time.

We thank you and may God be with you.

The Bee Four

James Scott Jr. George Y. Gruener
 W. J. Patterson Jr. R. Sato